

Introduction to Worship

13th September 2020 – Pentecost 15



It's been a great week for sitting in the sun or going for a walk.
It's also been lovely to see the leaves coming out and blossoms and flowers everywhere.
This lotus is from Blue Lotus Water Garden at Yarra Junction.
There are acres of them growing in small lakes with bridges over them
and they're at their best from November to January.

This week Joyce Suto was in hospital for a few days and now she's in rehab at Healesville.
Please say a prayer for her.

The good news is her book has been published and the publisher has sent copies home to Wales.

I was also involved in a *Celebration of Life* on Friday with the family of Ruth Lesley Ricketson,
a member of Blackburn North Nunawading.

For our *Being Human* story, Elaine shared a funny story.

(I've left out the name of the town and changed a couple of details. I hope that's ok Elaine)
Two strangers came into a pub at a small country town and the owner asked them: 'Where are you from?' They replied: 'The big smoke!' He replied: 'Well you shouldn't be here. Off you go!' And off they went. They got in their car, that was parked out front of the pub, one of them leaned over and put a round object on the dashboard and as he closed the door, it started flashing blue lights. As they got ready to drive off, he gave a cheeky grin and a wave to the owner of the pub.

I hope you enjoy this week's worship, with its themes around trusting God and God's power over creation and the value of forgiveness. May the worship be a blessing for you.

Blessings
Rev Tina



Mountview Worship @ Home

Sunday 13th September 2020



Miriam, Moses sister, and the Israelites Celebrating after crossing the Red Sea

Hymn: Praise My Soul The King Of Heaven – Helen Jackson [3:15]

<https://youtu.be/dl-7VVKOCB4>

*Lyrics: Henry Francis Lyte 1793-1847 alt.; Based on Psalm 103; Music: John Goss 1800-80;
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Praise My Soul The King Of Heaven

Praise, my soul, the king of heaven;
to his feet your tribute bring;
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
who like me his praise should sing?
Praise him, praise him, hallelujah,
praise the everlasting king!

Praise him for his grace and favour
to his people in distress;
praise him still the same for ever,
slow to chide and swift to bless;
praise him, praise him, hallelujah,
glorious in his faithfulness!

Father-like he tends and spares us;
well our feeble frame he knows;
in his hands he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes:
praise him, praise him, hallelujah,
widely as his mercy flows!

Frail as summer's flower we flourish,
 blows the wind and it is gone;
 but while mortals rise and perish
 God endures unchanging on.
 Praise him, praise him, hallelujah,
 praise the high eternal one!

Angels, help us to adore him
 ye behold him face to face,
 sun and moon, bow down before him,
 dwellers all in time and space:
 praise him, praise him, hallelujah,
 praise with us the God of grace!

Welcome To Our Service

Today we are focusing on God's power over nature and creation and over our lives.

May the worship bless you.

We acknowledge those who were here before us, the first inhabitants of this place
 We honour them for their custodianship of the land on which we gather today.



Call to Worship

God is Great and Powerful

We are His people and trust in God.

God is Love and God loves us.

We are His people and love God with all our being.

God is Faithful and steadfast.

We will remain faithful to God through all times.

Prayers Of Adoration, Invocation And Confession

Lord our God, mighty and powerful
 great is your faithfulness throughout all the storms of life
 Your power over nature and creation is amazing
 You parted the seas of fear so we can pass through them
 We are so small in all of the great plan of life and creation
 yet you come to us, you care for us and love us
We give you thanks and praise

Jesus our Lord,
 the one we love and follow,
 you raise us up and lead us through the storms and chaos of life
 You lead us on with your good news that gives us hope and purpose, courage and faith,
 for you are with us at all times
 we are never alone or abandoned.
We give you thanks and praise

Holy Spirit, filling us with us with love, faith and courage
 spurring us on through the challenges of life
 Moving our hearts to reach out to one another
 to help each other through this time
 We know we can call on God
 and God will send his Spirit upon us
 where God will be within us
We give you thanks and praise

Come Holy Spirit, come
 give us the courage to keep on following Jesus
 with trust and hope
 Come Holy Spirit.

And Lord, our loving God, if we need to forgive or receive forgiveness, give us grace,
 help us grieve the deep hurts that make forgiveness difficult
 help us find peace and be a peacemaker
 help us say sorry when needed
 Lord, in this moment we come before you with all that's on our hearts
 hoping for forgiveness or the grace to forgive.

Silence

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us
 "Your sins are forgiven"
Thanks be to God

Hymn: Great Is Your Faithfulness – Helen Jackson [3:19]

<https://youtu.be/YpqWD68pBCK>

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Scripture Readings

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Exodus 14: 19-31

14:19 The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. 14:20 It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so, the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night. 14:21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. 14:22 The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. 14:23 The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. 14:24 At the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army and threw the Egyptian army into panic. 14:25 He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt." 14:26 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." 14:27 So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea. 14:28 The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. 14:29 But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. 14:30 Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 14:31 Israel saw the great work that the LORD did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the LORD and believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

Matthew 18: 21-35

18:21 Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" 18:22 Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. 18:23 "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. 18:24 When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; 18:25 and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. 18:26 So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' 18:27 And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. 18:28 But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' 18:29 Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' 18:30 But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. 18:31 When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. 18:32 Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 18:33 Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' 18:34 And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. 18:35 So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

For The Young At Heart – ‘Forgiveness’

I have a book called *I'm Sorry* written by Sam McBratney. It's about two children who are best friends and play together, until the boy yells at the girl and she yells back. Afterwards they don't play together anymore and ignore one another. They act like they don't care but they do. They miss one another. Eventually it's the little girl who approaches the boy and says I'm sorry. He also says, 'I'm sorry.' Then they are best friends again. Children teach us a great deal about love. If only forgiveness was this easy. We have all heard the saying: 'Do not let the sun go down on your anger.' Some hurts go deep, and a grieving process is involved, before forgiveness comes. Jesus indicated in today's gospel that forgiveness is a practice, not a one off. It's a way of life or being. Husbands and wives soon discover this over the years, where together they learn to see the love of Jesus in one another as they forgive and forgive over the years and learn to let of what really doesn't count and nurture the love they have for each other.

Hymn: Blessed Assurance – Alan Jackson [2:02]

<https://youtu.be/6vfqYwfTqIE>

*Lyrics: Fanny Jane Crosby (1820-1915); Music: Phoebe Palmer Knapp (1839-1908);
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Sermon – ‘Our Great God’

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen.

I stayed at Iona during 2018. It's a small island off the coast of Scotland, a place of religious pilgrimage where forty Scottish kings are buried. I attended a conference on Celtic spirituality along with a large group from the United States. Our leader was Scottish minister, John Phillip Newell. The tradition is that groups go on a pilgrimage around the island and visit sites of religious and historical significance. The day was set for the walk and the weather report was extreme weather, with wild storms and winds predicted. John said he's led many pilgrimages over the years and had learnt not to change the date, no matter what. So, we were going on a pilgrimage during a wild storm. Suddenly there was mad rush to the only shop on the island that sold large raincoats. The next day there was heavy rain beating upon the ground, howling wind bashing against the stone buildings, black skies and lightening. I think you get the picture. I wasn't enthusiastic at all.

We set off, raincoats flapping in the wind which was nearly blowing us over. We used our walking sticks to dig into the ground to keep our balance. People watching from inside their warm kitchens must have thought we were crazy. Then, again, they were stoic Scots and may have thought it was perfectly normal to go for a stroll in a storm. On we went over the hills through a golf course to a small beach where we stood in a circle and prayed and sang. I couldn't hear a thing above the wind.

We set off again up and down hills for Saint Columba's Bay. This is us struggling through the wind and rain.

All I could think of was sitting in front of a cosy fire with a cuppa.

The wind was so strong it blew kelp up onto the grassed area five hundred or more feet away from the sea and dairy cattle were chomping into it and enjoying a feast.



It seemed like nature was lashing out at us. The next picture is of the roaring waves, which were going in and out and were high as a house. By now our faces were numb with the cold, but our thermals and wet weather gear was keeping our bodies warm and dry.



A small group of the people headed back, including me. We'd been out in the storm for over three hours and we were wet and feeling the cold. The rest were going on to a monk's hut built in 500 CE and then were going to climb a small mountain to visit a sacred spring. I'd visited the hut a few years back and the climbed the mountain a few days previously when it was sunny and warm. I didn't see the point in soldering on, although it would have been a good challenge.

As soon as we got back, we changed, had a hot shower and headed for the dining room for hot soup and afterwards sat in front of the fire. The others returned looking half frozen, showered and had hot soup and then joined us. Some stayed in front of the fire for the rest of the day and others had a nap. It had been an exhausting walk but one of the most amazing pilgrimage walk I'd ever done.

Experiencing the wildness of nature brought me closer to the magnificent, powerful, wild, creator God who we love and who loves us with a steadfastness that we are unable to comprehend.



The Red Sea

Try to imagine what it was like for Moses and the Israelites on their pilgrimage to the land God had promised them. The Egyptians were after them to kill them or bring them back to Egypt, the place they escaped from, where they'd lived in oppression. They didn't want to go back. To return would mean death or continuous spiritual struggle and battle to survive. The story is of them being led by an angel of God, where a pillar of cloud was behind them and in front of them. Light came from this pillar in the darkness of the night, lighting their way.



When they arrived at the sea God told Moses to stretch out his hand over it and God drove the sea back with a strong east wind all night, until the seabed was exposed, and the water was divided. Such was the power of God over nature and creation. Moses led the Israelites over the dry land, and they saw a wall of water on their right and left. Imagine the peoples trust and faith in God and Moses. Their terror and fear, their courage and bravery, and their faith to go ahead. It would have been like facing a mighty storm with the strong east wind, darkness, and the wall of water all around them.

The Egyptians kept pursuing them and were relentless. Morning came and the pillar of fire and cloud stopped them going any further and their chariots got bogged and they realised God was with the Israelites and they tried to flee back where they came from. As they did Moses stretched out his hand and God made the waters return to their normal place and the army was sweep away. The Israelites kept going, walking on dry land with the wall of water on their left and right, until they reached safety on the other side of the sea. When the people saw what God did, they praised God, were filled with holy fear and awe at all God could do. They believed in God. Miriam, Moses sister, and the Israelites must have danced and celebrated with joyful songs, giving thanks and praise to God.

It's an amazing story of journeying with God. The parting of the seas can be a metaphor for us of passing through the waves of COVID-19 that threaten to overwhelm our way of life and take our loved ones. That makes us afraid. We want to escape it. We need not fear for God is parting the waters of chaos and providing dry land and a way through the chaos and everchanging walk of faith. We cannot control this virus, which is part of nature. Our option is to surrender to God's care and trust God to bring us through this time. We walk in faith, despite our fears as we trust in God as we travel together following Jesus during these times of bad news, focusing on the good news of the gospel. Jesus is our way forward. He is our leader and will bring us through this time and one day, all of us will gather together to worship and give thanks to God. We will celebrate and have a big sing and morning tea. Until that time we continue on with courage and faith.

The Lord be with you

Miriam, Moses sister, and the Israelites celebrating after crossing the Red Sea

Rev Tina



Hymn: It Is Well With My Soul (When Peace Like A River) – Acapelldridge [4:20]

<https://youtu.be/ZYrL9ea1XUg>

Lyrics: Horatio Gates Spafford (1828-1888); Music: Philip Paul Bliss (1838-1876); Song Copyright Public Domain; Posted to YouTube by Acapelldridge with attributions

Offering Prayer

about offering up ourselves and giving thanks to God for all we have

**Lord and giver of every good thing
we bring to you our lives and gifts for your kingdom
all for transformation through your grace and love
made known in Jesus Christ our Saviour, amen**



Prayers Of The People And The Lord's Prayer

Derek Moore has prepared the Prayers of the people for you today

Let us come before God in prayer.

Today we pray for the nations of Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay – countries with long and sometimes troubled histories. We pray for the wellbeing of their populations during the current pandemic, and for religious tolerance between their peoples.

In the Ecumenical prayer cycle, we pray for the Engage Community Church in Ringwood; and in our Presbytery for the Manningham Uniting congregations. Lord, please bless these faith communities and be with them in their worship and restricted outreach.

We uphold to you Uniting AgeWell's Manningtree community in Hawthorn.
We pray for their wellbeing during these challenging times.

We give you thanks for the ongoing resilience of our Mountview community, including the leadership of our minister Rev. Tina; and the contributions of various members who are all helping to both serve you and sustain us.

Lord, please continue to strengthen all Emergency & Health workers, including Aged Care Staff – may they not become ill or overwhelmed in these difficult times. Please assist those who have contracted the virus to recover as quickly as possible.

May we generously support the planned Centre 81 initiative of assembling additional Christmas hampers, to offer to members of our local community who have been adversely affected by the pandemic.

You are all invited to join me in the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us in the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen

Dismissal

Go out into the world in the power of the spirit and in all things at all times remember Christ is with you.
Make your life your worship to the praise and glory of God. Amen

Hymn: Shalom To You Now – Helen Jackson [1:01]

<https://youtu.be/2oqiFenWxY>

*Lyrics by Elise Shoemaker Eslinger 1942–, to a traditional Spanish melody.
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Shalom To You Now

Prayerfully read the words. Imagine your family in Christ and send them heartfelt blessings from the Lord

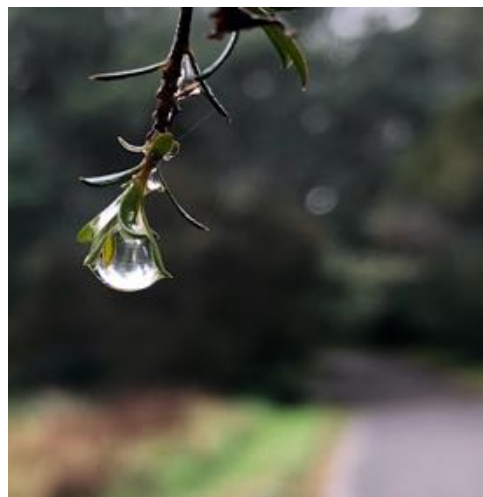
**Shalom to you now,
shalom, my friends.
May God's full mercies
bless you, my friends.
In all your living and through your loving,
Christ be your shalom,
Christ be your shalom.**

I have provided extra resources to accompany you on the journey. Rev Tina

Extra Worship Resources

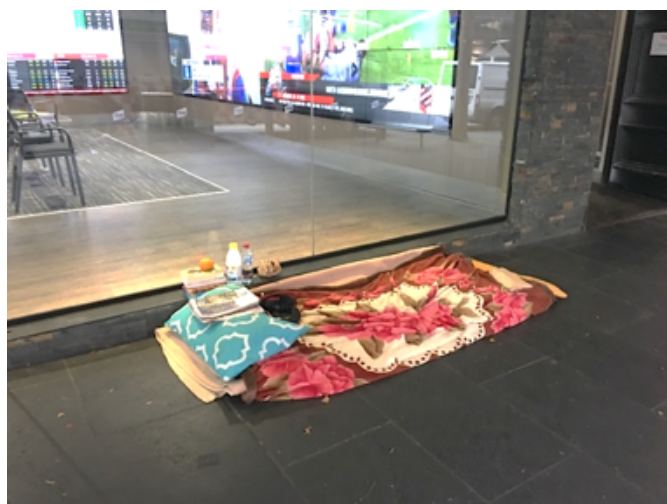
Water Is Important For Survival

It's powerful where there are floods and rocks split in two and gentle like a dewdrop.
All of creation depends on water. Jesus described the Holy Spirit as water. We are made mostly of water.
We cry and laugh tears. Water is beautiful and part of life. it is to be celebrated.



Hospitality

As we walk with our brothers and sisters of other faiths and beliefs during this time of COVID-19, we can choose to be the good neighbour and the good Samaritan to strangers along the way, providing support to organisations who help the most vulnerable in our community. Even a glass of water given to a stranger is important and is an expression of love.



A homeless person's home outside David Jones

My daily devotional offers a reflection on the hospitality we offer as we journey through life. It's from: Celtic Daily Prayer, Book Two, Farther Up and Farther In – The Northumbria Community Trust 2015
Hospitality, rather than being something you achieve is something you enter. It is an adventure that takes you where you never dreamed of going. It is not something you do, as much as it is something you become. You try and fail. You try again. You make room for one person at a time, you give one chance at a time, and each of these choices of the heart stretches your ability to receive others. This is how to grow more hospitable – by welcoming one person when the opportunity is given to you.

Daniel Homan OSB and Loni Collins Pratt

Prayer Before We Sleep

Prayers said when we wake up and just before we sleep are equally important. It's like they bracket our day. It is said we pray ceaselessly. We pray for someone when an ambulance passes by, for a friend in trouble, for a family member, before eating. We lament or intercede or give thanks to God for blessings. Prayer keeps us close to God and God in our heart. When we pray our heart expands as wide as an ocean.

Lord, we give you the day as it has been
 With all its hopes and all those deferred.
 We give you the day as it has been
 For all that was done
 And all that was left undone
 It is over now
 And we leave it in your very capable hands
 It is enough
 We give you the night that is ahead of us
 Keep our bodies, minds and spirits in complete safety
 Hold us in the hollow of your hand
 Lord reveal the night to be yours
 O God of the northern lights
 The night helps us see the light within each of us
 When we cannot see anything else, you are there. Amen



Joel Mason

For The Young At Heart

We found some tadpoles in a large puddle
 and have brought them home.
 They eat frozen lettuce and spinach.
 When they have grown into frogs,
 we will take most of them back to the park
 and may create a pond in our backyard for some.

There is a frog App called Frog ID, created by the Australian Museum, where you can record frog's noises and learn about frogs. People from all over Australia contribute to frog watch.

Frogs tell us that the environment is healthy.
 It's worth saying a prayer for frogs and their environment.



A Prayer For Faithfulness

In all that comes our way
 we will open our hearts to you and
 believe that all good things will work out
 for our good
 because we love you
 we will not be dragged down by life's challenges
 we will pray and know we are heard

Rev Tina, for Mountview Uniting Church

<https://www.mountviewuca.org/worship.html>

Final collation by Mountview Multimedia team.

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